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## Preparing for a Panel Interview

Preparing for a panel interview is slightly different than other interviews. Some steps are the same, but there are a few extra areas to focus on when preparing

When preparing for your panel interview, you'll want to cover all of the typical interview preparation steps for any interview – like researching the company, reviewing your resume, coming up with examples and stories you can share to highlight your past accomplishments, etc.

Yet there are some additional things you should do and keep in mind if you want to ace your panel interview and walk in fully prepared for this specific type of interview process. Let's look at the areas to spend extra time focusing on and preparing for with panel interviews.

1. **Body language and eye contact** - Be ready to maintain eye contact with the whole panel, with slightly more attention toward whoever asked the question you're answering. Practice your body language in general – eye contact, posture, keeping your hands and feet still (not tapping), etc. If you don't feel confident or don't have good body language habits, it's going to become a bigger problem in a panel interview or group interview because it's more pressure, more people to make eye contact with and interact with, etc.
2. **Prepare some questions** - It's important to ask a lot of questions in a panel interview. So a big portion of your effort in preparing for the panel interview should be writing down great questions to ask them. When you ask your questions, you can direct a question to a specific person or the entire panel.
3. **Try to find out who will be on the panel in advance** - If you want to prepare to ace your panel interview, you should spend some time learning as much as you can about the people on the panel. How many people are you meeting with? What are their names and job titles? If you're not sure, ask the person who scheduled the interview (the recruiter, HR person, hiring manager, etc.). Then do some research on LinkedIn and find out what type of background these people have. Do they have a more technical background? Is it mostly people from HR and non-technical areas? Does anyone on the panel have the job title you'd have if they hire you? (e.g.

someone who is your peer?). And who are the more senior-level people on the panel, such as your future boss?

All of this will help you feel more confident and relaxed in the interview, and give better interview answer. So don't neglect this part of preparing for your panel interview.

Note: Treat everyone the same in the panel interview. Just because one person is "lower" in the company does not mean you should act any differently or address their questions any differently. In fact, this is good advice for any interview process, and it's something we recommend in the advice across our site. Why? Because you never know who the hiring manager is going to ask an opinion from before making the yes/no decision on whether to hire you. This includes the receptionist too!

4. **Bring a resume for each person on the panel** - This is a simple and easy way to look prepared and make sure everyone in the panel interview is familiar with your background or can quickly catch up at the start of the meeting. So when you prepare for your interview, print out enough copies of your resume so that you're sure you'll have enough to hand out at the beginning. In fact bring a few extras in case someone unexpected joins the panel.
5. **Be ready to take notes** - You're going to be taking in a \*lot\* of information in the typical panel interview, so this is important. You'll need to remember key facts about the position when you follow-up, when you ask questions later, and when you prepare for future interviews or discuss the role further.
6. **Build rapport and try to make a strong connection** - Do your best to build a connection with as many people in the panel interview as possible. Find common areas of interest when preparing for the interview, share stories, mix your questions into the interview instead of just waiting until the end (this makes it feel more like a back-and-forth conversation, and less like an interrogation). Also make sure to learn everyone's name and use their names in the conversation.

Remember in any interview, and especially a panel interview, they're not just evaluating your skills and experience – they're looking to see how you'll fit in with the current team, company culture and more.

This is also a reason researching the company when preparing for your panel interview is so important... because you can learn about their current team, company culture and more on their website and social media. Then you can use this information to build a stronger bond and show them the traits they're looking for. But you can't do that if you don't research the company when you prepare for the interview.

## **How to conclude your panel interview**

1. Shake each person's hand and thank them for their time.
2. Get business cards from each person you met so you'll have their names and emails to follow up.
3. Then ask them who will be in touch about next steps, and how long it will take to hear back. That way you'll know when to follow-up after the interview, and who to get in touch with if you have questions.